

Message Text

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43

ACTION DPW-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 IO-15 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-15

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P R 111046Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 6188

USMISSION GENEVA

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE VIENTIANE 7017

USIAC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, LA

SUBJECT: RADIO OF FREE ASIA

REF: A. BANGKOK 15807; B. SECSTATE 201119

1. CONCUR WITH REF. B.

2. WE WOULD LIKE TO PASS ALONG THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MAY HELP CLARIFY THE ISSUE IN REF. A. RADIO OF FREE ASIA (ROFA) HAS BEEN BROADCASTING VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE MESSAGES CONCERNING AMERICAN AND NORTH VIETNAMESE POW/MIA OVER LAO NATIONAL RADIO (LNR) FOR OVER TWO YEARS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT BROADCASTS HAVE BEEN MADE FROM FACILITIES IN SVN FOR A SIMILAR PERIOD. ROFA MAINTAINS P.O. BOX 836 IN VIENTIANE AND THE VOICE OF FREEDOM, P.O. BOX 95, SAIGON, ACTS AS ROFA'S AGENT THERE. THE VIENTIANE P.O. BOX IS SERVICED BY ROFA'S LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE, MR. LASZLO DE BOGATHY WHO DELIVERS SCRIPTS AND TAPES FORWARDED FROM WASHINGTON TO LNR. HE ALSO SEES TO ROFA'S LOCAL FINANCIAL AND

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OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS.

3. IN EARLY APRIL, ROFA WASHINGTON PROPOSED IN A LETTER TO THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION THAT ROFA INCREASE ITS BROADCAST OPERATIONS IN LAOS BY ALSO EMPLOYING THE RLGAF RADIO NETWORK TO BROADCAST LAO LANGUAGE MESSAGES CONCERNING AMERICAN AND LAO POW/MIA. ESSENTIALLY THE SAME SCRIPT FORMAT EMPLOYED IN THE VIETNAMESE BROADCASTS IS EMPLOYED IN LAO LANGUAGE TAPES EXCEPT THAT THE LAO RED CROSS COSPONSORS THE PROGRAMS. THE MESSAGE IS BROADCAST FIVE TIMES WEEKLY DURING PRIME TIME. ROFA WASHINGTON PROVIDES WEEKLY LISTS OF FOUR U.S. MIA. THE LAO RED CROSS FURNISHES THE NAMES OF A SIMILAR NUMBER OF LAO MIA. THE VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE BROADCASTS OVER LNR HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO ONE PER WEEK ON SUNDAY MORNINGS.

4. THE LAO RED CROSS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE RLGAF G-2. WAS PREPARED TO AUTHENTICATE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO ROFA RADIO APPEALS AND CERTIFY REWARD PAYMENTS OF ONE HUNDRED GRAMS OF GOLD (\$250) FOR VALIDATED INFORMATION. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE LAO RED CROSS WAS PLANNING TO TURN ITS FUNCTION OVER TO THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS REPRESENTATIVE IN VIENTIANE.

5. IN EARLY JULY, DE BOGATHY AND MR. ARTHUR ULIN, COUNSELOR FOR BROADCAST OPERATIONS IN ROFA'S WASHINGTON OFFICES, CALLED ON EMB OFFICER/JCRC LIAISON OFFICER TO DISCUSS ROFA'S LOCAL OPERATIONS. EMBOFF POINTED OUT THE OBVIOUS PROBLEMS WHICH WOULD SURFACE FROM PROMISES OF FINANCIAL REWARDS, I.E., VALIDATION OF INFORMATION, IMPROPER HANDLING OF REMAINS, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING A CREDIBILITY GAP IN THE LOCAL AREA WHICH COULD INTERFERE WITH FUTURE OFFICIAL CASUALTY RESOLUTION ACTIVITIES. MR. ULIN WAS RECEPTIVE AND STATED THAT REWARDS WOULD BE LIMITED TO RECEIPT OF INFORMATION WHICH LED TO POSITIVE IDENTIFICATIONS. THE ARRANGEMENT WITH THE RLGAF G-2, THE LAO RED CROSS AND ROFA WAS AN OUTGROWTH OF THIS INTERVIEW. EMBOFF CLOSED THE INTERVIEW BY STATING THAT THE US MISSION COULD NOT GIVE ANY OFFICIAL SANCTION TO WHAT WAS A PRIVATE COMMERCIAL ALBIET HUMANITARIAN ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN ROFA AND THE LOCAL LAO AUTHORITIES. MR. ULIN OSTENSIBLY LEFT VIENTIANE FOR GENEVA FOR ADDITIONAL DISCUSSIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS.

6. SUBSTANCE OF ABOVE AND INFORMATION IN REF B HAS BEEN PASSED TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LOCAL INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS REPRESENTATIVE, MR. WERNER BLATTER.
PATE

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